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## UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

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The phenomenal growth of University Extension in the United States in the past ten years may be looked upon as indicative of a new interpretation of the legitimate scope of university service. Nevertheless, it is still maintained in many of our learned institutions that higher education should be removed from any possible intimacy with the common things of life. These institutions repudiate the idea that organized extension of their services may become a worthy function among their acknowledged activities—worthy not only in enabling them to reach greater numbers than the few who may assemble within their gates, but essentially so in its influence upon their own life and growth. Though with these, as with the more liberal, pursuit of the truth is the fundamental and all-embracing object of existence, they apparently fail to realize that truth does not belong to the cloister more than to the shops and homes or to the streets and fields, but is inseparably of them all.

The return of power to the institution is not, however, the main justification of University Extension. Such justification exists primarily in the fact that the university is the one great source and repository of the knowledge which the people—all, not merely a few, of the people—need in order to reach their highest level of achievement and well-being.

Is it not a very uncharacteristic view of the field of the university which seems to limit its functions to those of a sealed storehouse with facilities for giving out its invaluable contents only to the few who may be able to learn the cabalistic passes that unlock its doors? More in keeping with the modern spirit is the new slogan of unlimited service which lays upon the university a command to retrieve to the world its losses from undiscovered talent and undeveloped utilities and to give freely to humanity the pleasures and profits of which so many are deprived by ignorance of the work of the masters of art and learning, and of the laws of sane living. For such purposes as these the university, in the full-

ness of its possessions and powers, must inevitably be acknowledged to be, in the words of President Van Hise, "the best instrument."

### WHAT IS UNIVERSITY EXTENSION ?

University Extension may be defined as an agency of popular education by which the benefits of the university are extended to the entire population without other prerequisite on the part of this large student body than the desire to learn and the ability to make use of the service. This does not imply a new or original philosophy of education, but presents a practical and proportionate method by which are met the requirements of a democratic form of government, a form which theoretically, at least, rests upon the principle that the vigor and permanence of the nation depend upon the intelligence of its whole people.

In England, as early as 1850, an expression was used that has since become a by-word in the language of University Extension. "Though it may be impossible," said an early advocate of the movement, "to bring the masses requiring education to the university, may it not be possible to carry the university to them?" This phrase, "carry the university to them" (the people), expresses very simply the underlying purpose of extension. Another phrase of earlier date points to the need for "the taking of a definite part by the university in the education of persons who had not been matriculated." Thus over half a century ago and under the more aristocratic circumstances of English life, the university was called upon to take a part in the spread of education among the masses and the name, University Extension, even at that time, was added to terms already familiar in educational nomenclature. The words *intramural* and *extramural* also came into use at this time as applied to work taken at the institution and outside of or beyond its walls, and later the words *resident* and *non-resident* were used as applied to students and courses of study. These terms explain themselves in a general way but have slowly grown to connote certain definite relations in modern education, the significance of which will appear in the following account of the development of extension.

### HISTORY OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

The old English system of University Extension which grew out of the deliberations and experiments made in the middle of the nineteenth century consisted in lecture courses accompanied by

syllabi, with assignments of collateral reading and, finally, written examinations. The work was conducted by university professors, who through the agency of local committees or by personal solicitation formed classes in circuits of non-university communities. This method depended for its success almost wholly upon the superficial gifts and personality of the lecturer, who in order to hold his classes together must possess the faculties not only of a scholar, but also of a teacher, a social leader, and an orator. So versatile a professor was seldom found and yet for a time this form of extension met with an encouraging reception. The weaknesses of the method developed soon and modifications were adopted which led to the establishment of the present tutorial system. These changes were accomplished through the agency of an administrative board comprising representatives of both the capitalistic and the laboring classes. Extension methods became in this evolution less severely academic and more serviceable to persons who must study without interrupting the ordinary interests and occupations of their lives.

When in 1887 University Extension, its more aristocratic form as yet unmodified, was brought to America, its liberal promise of educational opportunity in exact keeping with democratic ideals, at once gained for it many friends. The method was first described at a library conference, in Albany, N. Y., and almost immediately beginnings of University Extension were made in the cities of Buffalo, Chicago, and St. Louis, as a form of library service.

In 1889, Columbia University announced through Teachers College elementary courses in science for the benefit of school teachers in New York City and its environs.

In 1890, the American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, supported by private subscription, was organized in Philadelphia.

In 1891, the first state appropriation for University Extension, \$10,000, was made by the state of New York.

In 1891, Chicago organized a privately endowed society which in 1892 was taken over by the University of Chicago. In the latter year, the University of Wisconsin also began its organized work of extension.

In December, 1891, a national congress on University Extension was held in Philadelphia. This meeting brought together

representatives of colleges and universities, libraries and privately supported extension societies. The reports showed a remarkable growth. Between 1887 and December, 1891, barely four years, twenty-eight attempts to introduce University Extension had been made, a few of them with, but the greater number without, financial support. The delegation to this congress displayed great enthusiasm, but the subsequent history of extension in the United States gives rise to the belief that some, at least, of those present were visionary theorists, rather than experienced and practical educators. This was the last gathering in the interest of University Extension for many years; a rapid decline in the progress of the work began almost at once.

The period of depression in the extension movement may be attributed to the difficulty met in securing financial provision for an educational departure at once so radical and so little understood, also, no doubt, to the almost impossible requirements in the qualifications of the instructors, and very considerably to lack of appreciation to the extent even of dislike for the method within the institution, a condition which led to much open criticism and deliberate efforts to check its growth. Above all, however, the decline must be attributed to the inadequacy of the plan as an adaptation of university service to the special needs and circumstances of a non-resident student body.

After ten or more years of fluctuation recovery came as the result of a truer interpretation of the ends to be gained and a clearer recognition of the difficulties to be overcome. With the adoption of more suitable methods, it became possible to demonstrate the value of the work and to convince legislators that this service as offered by the state institution, at least, is in reality an extension of opportunity to their constituents, and worthy, therefore, of the legislative support indispensable to its continuance.

From this time, about 1906, the growth of extension was assured particularly in the state institutions, which, as will be seen, form a majority among those extending their services beyond the traditional campus.

"The tight little idea that education is the concern of childhood and certain rigid formalities of place and plan has broken down," said a student of extension, "and hundreds of agencies more or less organized are carrying whatever instruction people

want, directly to the people who want it, wherever they may be found." University Extension which includes and epitomizes all of these agencies, the same writer calls "a deeply significant movement to saturate the whole people with the upward tendencies and convictions of education."

In 1910 some inquiries were made with respect to the status, at that time, of extension in the United States. From letters sent to seventy-five institutions, sixty-five replies were received and fifty-four of these reported some form of University Extension; twenty-three were state institutions; the work of fifteen was well organized under the management of a dean, director or Extension committee; twenty-two offered credit courses, eleven by correspondence-study; in the larger cities classes similar to those conducted at the university but away from it and at hours convenient for workers were meeting a need; lecture courses with class features had been largely, not wholly, superseded by more popular courses of the lyceum type; and many institutions were using extension merely as an aid to elementary school teachers in improving their preparation and standing. Financial provision was reported as inadequate or wholly lacking.

Three years later, in 1913, a questionnaire was sent to several hundred institutions, as foundation for the bulletin published, the following year, by the United States Bureau of Education. Extension activities were now reported by 103 institutions, in fifty-one of which the work was described as organized and more or less adequately supported by legislative appropriations—thirty-seven of these fifty-one offering single lectures or courses; thirty-five conducting local classes in elementary, collegiate or advanced subjects, credit or non-credit; thirty-two giving correspondence-study courses, twenty of these including both credit and non-credit work; eighteen offering assistance to elementary schools notably in the establishment of continuation, vocational and industrial branches, seventeen assisting in the formation of debating clubs and supplying library aids; twenty-eight engaging in municipal and community service of many types.

A more recent inquiry made in order to bring the statistics of extension up to date for the National University Extension Association, shows certain definite advances: first, in the number of institutions offering one or more forms of Extension service; second,

in the number of students enrolled in classes or in correspondence-study courses, particularly the increase in numbers studying for credit; third, in the variety of types of Extension activity due in part undoubtedly to the growing demand for the many divisions of state, municipal and community service; and fourth, in the enormous total increase in expenditure.

The three universities, Columbia, Chicago, and Wisconsin, and the Philadelphia Society mentioned as inaugurating extension service between the years 1889 and 1892 are conspicuous in having continued their work consistently from the beginning. Though, as in the case of other early attempts, the course of their development experienced fluctuations, and though from time to time their methods were changed either in form of service or in administration, yet they remained in existence and are now acknowledged leaders among the institutions in which extension has become an organic function.

It may seem remarkable that institutions of private endowment should form a majority among the earliest leaders in this popular movement but it must be remembered that its original form did not present the strong features of practical value that were introduced later. Today institutions of state foundation are greatly in the lead in numbers and in their estimate of the importance of the extramural work. These institutions look upon Extension not only as a duty to the state from which they derive support, but also as an interpreter of themselves to the people and of the people to them, an essential source of strength to both.

Before closing this statistical review of the growth of University Extension some account must be given of the large amount of this service that is offered by institutions with no organized extension but which are doing work along extension lines. Analysis of the several questionnaires from which data are taken shows fully as many, probably more institutions extending their service without definite organization than are shown with this provision. Among these roughly estimated, about 50 per cent are sending out lecturers from among members of the faculty to give single addresses or courses of lectures, with or without remuneration; 15 per cent offer lectures and entertainments, musical, dramatic or one or both combined with lectures; 10 per cent offer correspondence-study conducted by members of the faculty, usually covering the same

subject matter as that offered in classes at the University; 10 per cent offer courses to teachers adapted to their varying requirements; 10 per cent offer informational service to the governing bodies of small towns; also institutes, exhibits, and library and other aids to civic and social betterment. The remaining fraction perform any service they can when opportunities arise. The unorganized service, as a whole, ranges from definite courses offered for university credit, to such undefined service as is laconically reported in one instance, as "Saloons driven out."

#### FORMS OF ADMINISTRATION OF UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Among institutions organized for University Extension about one-half administer this work by a department or division devoted specifically to this purpose. Such a department comprises all of the machinery of an independent school or college, with dean or director, secretaries in charge of the several types of extension, heads of lines of work (as, for example, English, Engineering, Mathematics, Latin, History, etc.), instructors, lecturers, text writers, librarians, organizers, and the necessary force of clerical assistants. About one-fourth of the institutions doing organized extension administer it by or in another department of the institution—sometimes The Department of Education, often that of Sociology. Extension in the remaining fourth is divided between administration by a committee or single member of the faculty or by a director and committee of the faculty, the extension board sometimes including also the president of the university and a member or members of the board of trustees or regents.

In the administration of credit courses the association of the extension and resident faculties is naturally intimate, it being necessary in the interest of both that the same requirements be stringently exacted of the non-resident as of the resident students.

Two general methods prevail by which the services of the University are extended to the entire state. The more elaborate of these involves a division of the state into districts in each of which is maintained an administrative force, complete in itself, but under the direction of the central or home organization. The second method is by organization of local volunteer or paid workers, who coöperate with agents of the home office in stimulating the demand for and accomplishing the introduction of whatever service



is offered by the institution. This method varies greatly in the degree of responsibility imposed upon the volunteer worker, the institutions which succeed in effective work maintaining a strong and large corps of organizers who though having headquarters at the institution spend their time in visiting communities in every part of the state.

### FORMS OF SERVICE

In reviewing the growth of University Extension the several usual types or forms of this service have been mentioned. Descriptions of these types must of necessity be inadequately brief. Some of them fortunately are so generally familiar as to need little comment beyond their enumeration. This is true of the lecture service, which has in recent years become so widespread and potent an influence in disseminating knowledge and moulding public opinion or as an enjoyable investment of leisure hours. The contribution of the university to this work partakes in a majority of instances of the nature of lyceum courses, two main differences existing between the service offered by the commercial Lyceum Bureau and that of the University. The primary difference results from the fact that the University rarely makes this service a source of revenue and is therefore enabled to offer to any community a grade of instruction by lectures or of entertainments usually available only to cities. The other main difference lies in the consistent effort made by the University to introduce as high a quality of service as will be accepted by the community, with the end in view of creating a demand for a better quality in the hope by this policy of progressing from that which is as good as possible to that which is the best possible. The lecture service may be termed cultural rather than educational.

### EXTRAMURAL AND CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY COURSES

Extramural classes and correspondence-study constitute an extremely important element in University Extension. Possessing features of uniformity they may be grouped together. Through their instrumentality is accomplished the purely educational work of extension—the standardized, graded, consecutive instruction adaptable in its application but carefully controlled and regulated.

These methods of instruction are used in giving work ranging

from the advanced studies taken by persons of professional or official standing for the purpose usually of keeping up with the times, through intermediate grades, to the more elementary courses applied to commercial and industrial vocations.

Both methods offer opportunity for work for academic credit, or not, as desired. Both present features of convenience to the non-resident student in their flexibility as to time and place of study and choice of subject. And either, contrary to the popular notion, may produce a higher average of scholarship than is found within the walls of institutions. A word must be said in support of this contention. The non-resident is as a rule older and more experienced than the resident student and seldom is actuated mainly or solely by ambition to gain a degree. Understanding his educational needs he takes his course for the purpose of mastering a subject.

The prejudice that still views University Extension as a superficial educational method and destructive to scholarship grew up under the old régime, before its changed methods entitled extension to claim an equal rank among other legitimate activities of educational institutions.

Correspondence-study teaching, particularly, though it has suffered its share of obloquy, if fairly interpreted gives to the university its broadest and most gracious opportunity, the opportunity to open its avenues of learning to all who would enter, to graft instruction upon experience, to mould and enrich minds already mature and thoughtful, or to rescue from oblivion undiscovered gifts. It is a method carrying a peculiarly intimate and responsive relation between the instructor and the pupil. To equip for life as well as for livelihood is an ideal that may be realized through this relation. Sympathy and intuition therefore are almost as important among the instructor's qualifications as are knowledge and technical skill. The best men and material resources of the University are demanded for this service.

The statistics quoted show a notable increase in the use of extramural classes and correspondence-study instruction for the purpose of acquiring some part of a regular academic course *in absentia*. No less striking is the growth of work in commercial and industrial education. The need for this service is immeasurably great and extension methods are practical and successful.

The pupil, however backward, cannot fail to see the value of his studies, because they are based on the processes of his daily tasks and though he may not always appreciate the effort made to broaden his outlook, as soon as he realizes that he is on the way to a higher wage he awakens to a new ambition.

For these forms of extension a large amount of special text is prepared, it being necessary, except in credit courses, to adapt the lessons in treatment and scope to the requirements of the individual correspondence student or of the class. A completed course in this original material may form the basis for a book and as a matter of convenience such texts are collated and published as promptly as is practicable. Curiously, a considerable demand has developed for these volumes when placed on the market quite outside of the field of University Extension, a fact that may be regarded as a favorable commentary upon extension methods in popular education.

The publication and circulation of bulletins, pamphlets, and reports dealing with and interpreting matters of general value and interest to the public is a common form of extension activity.

#### THE SERVICE BUREAU

The awakening of interest in public questions by debating and public discussion—particularly in community clubs, community centers, and high school organizations—is one of the oldest methods of extension service. To do this work many institutions are maintaining bureaus which have the dual purpose of collecting popularly prepared information on subjects of current interest (“package libraries”), and of forming debating leagues wherever possible for the purpose of debating important current questions. The method is recognized as of inestimable value in the moulding of public opinion, although unless administered with care and kept scrupulously free from partisan bias, it may prove a menace to the institution promoting it.

Universities are coming to deal more and more through their extension service with the public at large, and with public problems. This has given rise to a distinct form of community and public welfare work, through which the institution deals with a community as an entity, offering technical information on community problems, inciting public interest, and, when necessary, helping the community

to organize for action. In this manner are treated such group problems as child welfare, public health, recreation, and improvements and problems of municipal government. This work is done by means of bureaus of municipal reference, health, child welfare, stereopticon and motion picture service, community music, social and civic center promotion, and through institutes, surveys, and exhibits. The aim of this service is to enlighten and inspire, never to infringe upon the professional field.

In March, 1895, the First National University Extension Conference met at Madison, Wisconsin. Forty-five delegates were present at this Conference representing 24 leading colleges and universities. The occasion led to the formation of a permanent University Extension Association with a membership of 28 institutions.

The meeting tended toward better understanding among extension workers, a clarifying of ideas as to possible standardizations and invaluable exchanges of ideas and experience.

The printed proceedings of this conference are a remarkable record of achievement and enthusiasm. The interpretation they present of the university's new field of service is useful both as an inspiration and a guide to those who are engaged in the development of University Extension.

The new association has already more than justified its existence.

Assuming that leadership is developed within the institution, extension looks to the creating of an intelligent commonalty. This is the day of socializing, the day of the common spread of appreciation of art and literature, the day of prevention, of preventive medicine, preventive law, and preventive religion, each in its field a measure of social safeguarding. Above all and for all it is the day when the university uncovers its light that its rays may illumine with equal power the high places and the low.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Reber, Louis E. *University Extension in the United States*. Bulletin 19, 1914. United States Bureau of Education, Washington, D.C.